

## **Minutes of Regular and Special Meeting of October 25, 2005**

### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **CALL TO ORDER 7:30 P.M.**

#### **ROLL CALL**

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Feierbach, Mathewson, Bauer, Metropulos, Warden

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: Interim City Manager Crist, City Attorney Zafferano, Interim Community Development Director deMelo, Human Resources Director Dolan, Public Works Director Davis, Fire Chief Lowden, Information Services Manager Harnish, Police Chief Mattei, City Clerk Cook.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by City Clerk Cook.

#### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

##### **Proclamation Honoring Eagle Scout Justin Vinay**

Mayor Warden read the Proclamation, and noted that Mr. Vinay received the Proclamation at a special ceremony in September.

**Justin Vinay**, Winding Way, explained his project, and stated that he was asked to place a bench at a memorial for a Carlmont student who died. He made other improvements to the area as well.

##### **Presentation by PG&E (Gas Rebate Program/Emergency Preparedness)**

**Kathy Lavezzo**, PG&E representative, provided background information on PG&E in San Mateo County, including demographics of its employees. She stated that natural gas prices would be increasing as a result of damage to infrastructure caused by the recent hurricanes. She clarified that PG&E makes no profit from natural gas, and is attempting to minimize the increase by using gas in storage.

Ms. Lavezzo outlined methods for reducing energy bills, including bill management and programs for low-income residents. She also outlined various operational tips on how to keep usage low. She noted that PG&E's gas rebate program has been reinstated. She announced that a County-wide Disaster Preparedness Workshop would be held on November 12 at the Expo Center.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Lavezzo clarified that natural gas prices have increased 70 percent since last October, but the increase is expected to reduce to 40-50 percent for the remainder of the season. She recommended that heaters be set at 68 degrees and not turned off and on since this forces the system to work harder. She also responded that the Old County Road undergrounding project is expected to begin in August of 2006.

##### **Bulletin Board Presentation for Channel 27**

Information Services Manager Harnish presented examples of information to be included in the electronic bulletin board for broadcast on Channel 27. She noted that it would be easy to add slides once the program is developed, including short video clips. She clarified that a policy should be developed regarding the inclusion of information from other organizations.

Council discussion ensued, and Council concurred to use the format of the second example presented.

In response to Councilmember Feierbach, Information Services Manager Harnish responded that there is a \$7,000 start-up cost for streaming video of Council meetings, and a monthly recurring cost of \$650.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**C.A. Reitmeier**, Belmont resident, stated that another city has appointed a Tree Task Force, and that all cities have tree stories. She noted that residents may not be aware of how to care for trees. She also commented she would like a silent tribute for Rosa Parks.

**Joan Peceimer**, Friends of the Belmont Library, announced that over \$7600 was raised at the recent fundraising event held at Ralston Hall featuring author Isabel Allende. She also announced that special coupons used at Borders books between November 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> would provide a 10 percent discount on book purchases, and the difference would be donated to the Library. In addition, she also announced that the Belmont Rotary Club recently donated \$40,000 to the fundraising project for the Library. Councilmember Bauer, a Rotarian, presented a check on behalf of Rotary.

**Pam Clarke**, Friends of the Belmont Library President, thanked Belmont Rotary, and noted that other than the contribution from Oracle for the building itself, this was the largest donation to the fundraising efforts.

**Sheila Cockshott**, Yosemite Drive, requested that the Council consider formal opposition to Proposition 76. She stated this proposition gives too much power to the Governor, and is devastating to schools. She urged the Governor and the legislature to work together regarding fiscal issues.

Mayor Warden stated that since this item is not on the agenda, and Council is unable to consider the speaker's request.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilmember Metropulos announced that on October 15, he, Councilmember Feierbach, and Council candidate Dickenson attended an event at the Yaseen Center to commemorate the start of Ramadan. He also announced that he attended Notre Dame High School's "Principals' Circle" event held recently.

Councilmember Mathewson announced that as noted during the PG&E presentation, the County would hold a Disaster Preparedness Workshop on November 12 at the Expo Center, and that families were welcome.

Mayor Warden reminded everyone to vote on November 8. He noted that the Council meeting normally held that evening would be rescheduled to November 9.

**RECESS (to consider Belmont Fire Protection District agenda):** 8:20 P.M.  
**RECONVENE:** 8:45 P.M.

### **AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

Mayor Warden announced that Item 4-J (Resolution Prohibiting Parking along Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues Adjacent to Semeria Park) would be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of members of the public. Councilmember Feierbach requested the removal of Item 4-C (Police Department/City Hall Project - October Monthly Update) for separate consideration.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Approval of** Minutes of the Special and Regular Meeting of September 27, 2005.

**Acceptance of** Written Communication: 1) Received October 14, 2005, California PUC application of Yoseph B. Hiwot, DBA Eagel Airport Shuttle.

**Acceptance of** Belmont Library/Belameda Park Project - October Monthly Update

**Adoption of** Ordinance 1010 Amending Municipal Code Chapter 14, Motor Vehicles and Traffic (on-street parking of RV's, boats, trailers), second reading and adoption

**Approval of** Resolution 9710 Approving the ABAG Report "Taming Natural Disasters" with City of Belmont Annex as the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for the City of Belmont

**Approval of** Resolution 9711 Approving a Permanent Encroachment Agreement for Replacing an Existing Retaining Wall within the Public Right-of-Way at 1332 Paloma Avenue

**Approval of** Resolution 9712 Approving a Permanent Encroachment Agreement for Replacing an Existing Retaining Wall within the Public Right-of-Way at 100 Virginia Avenue

**Approval of** Resolution 9713 Approving a Professional Services Agreement with BKF Engineers for Storm Drain Evaluation and Master Plan Study for an Amount not to Exceed \$150,000

**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Mathewson, seconded by Councilmember Bauer, the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved, as amended, by a show of hands.

### **Police Department/City Hall Project - October Monthly Update**

In response to Councilmember Feierbach, Interim City Manager Crist stated that staff has been working with the contractor regarding the spots on the new carpeting. He noted it might need to be replaced in some areas. He also stated that the solar project outlined in the report is a potential future project that can be placed below the line at this time. Councilmember Feierbach noted that this issue has not been discussed with the Council, and she expressed concern that the Priority Calendar process would be circumvented.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Feierbach, seconded by Councilmember Metropulos, the Police Department/City Hall Project October Monthly Update was unanimously accepted by a show of hands.

### **Resolution Prohibiting Parking along Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues Adjacent to Semeria Park**

Public Works Director Davis stated that parallel parking has been permitted along this property since the City acquired it, which conflicts with existing Ordinance prohibiting parking on dirt.

**Mike Bushue**, Semeria Avenue, stated that until purchased by the City, this property was overgrown, full of sinkholes, and used as overflow parking. He supported its acquisition for a future park. He noted the neighbors were not notified of this proposed parking restriction. There is a parking problem in the area along narrow streets. He noted that people are obeying the parallel parking restriction, and recommended leaving it as is. He noted that four parking places would be required if a home were built here.

**Todd Adler**, Casa Bona Avenue, stated that he supported the purchase of the site for a future park. He noted that it is currently needed for parking, and a prohibition will impact parking in the area.

**Dennis Fetterly**, Semeria Avenue, stated that he too supports a future park at this site, but the area is needed for parking for guests and additional cars owned by residents. He noted that safety concerns have not been addressed.

**Art Paley**, Semeria Avenue (via Comment Card), expressed opposition to any parking prohibitions in or around this parcel.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she supported the purchase of the lot for a future park. She noted the park would be developed for the neighborhood, and it is not intended that people outside the neighborhood would drive to go to the park. She stated that existing ordinances prohibit parking on dirt. She recommended allowing staggered street parking. She added that when the park is developed, no one is going to be able to park on the property. She commented that many people do not use their garage for cars, but as storage.

Mayor Warden stated the streets are narrow and cars parked on either side almost block the street. He noted this condition exists on many other narrow streets in the Cipriani neighborhood, and is a safety issue. He described the red curb installation on San Juan Boulevard, which alleviated the safety problem. Parking on dirt creates a soil problem on the Semeria lot. He noted that if the lot had been developed as a home, there would be no parking available.

Councilmember Metropulos agreed that this is a safety issue, and supported the concept of staggered parking similar to San Juan Boulevard. He noted that a fire truck would have difficulty because of cars parked on either side of the street.

In response to Councilmember Mathewson, Public Works Director Davis confirmed that the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee discussed this issue. He noted that this area is different from San Juan Boulevard due to the short length of curb, and that there are off-street spaces available along Semeria Avenue. A portion of the vacant lot could be paved to facilitate parking.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Bauer, seconded by Councilmember Metropulos, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to continue this item in order for staff to study alternatives, and for the current parking allowance to remain status quo.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Status Report on the Acquisition of an Interactive Voice Response System**

Building Official Nolfi stated that the goal of this program is to increase customer service for building, planning, and public works inspections. Customers can use the interactive system 24 hours a day to schedule or check on the status of inspections, and if called during regular hours, they can still choose to talk to a live person. He reviewed the various modules and explained how the system works, and noted it is available for the hearing impaired. He stated that outreach to contractors would need to be accomplished to educate them how to use the program.

Council discussion ensued. Building Official Nolfi clarified that this system is similar to programs used by computer companies for technical assistance, and the airlines for flight information.

In response to Council questions, Information Services Manager Harnish explained that this system has the capability of expansion to other departments. She noted that included in the proposal is a provision for system upgrades during the first year, as well as a 5-year support contract without upgrades.

Councilmember Bauer stated he supported this program as a means to improve customer service.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Mathewson, seconded by Councilmember Metropulos, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to move forward with the acquisition of an Interactive Voice Response System for building inspections, as proposed.

### **Review and Direction on Recommendations from the Permit Efficiency Task Force**

Building Official Nolfi stated that the Permit Efficiency Task Force held seven meetings, and made a number of recommendations. He noted that not all members were unanimous in the recommendations.

Interim Community Development Director de Melo outlined the recommendations, which address quality of service. He clarified that some recommended components have already been implemented. He also clarified that some of the recommendations in the area of planning review have the potential for policy changes, such as increasing the threshold for administrative approval on projects. He outlined other recommendations, including those addressing geotechnical reports, permanent encroachment and hauling permits, and a proposed requirement that applicants hire an architect or engineer for projects on slopes in excess of 18 percent. He noted that other recommendations include an assessment of staffing levels and cross-training.

In response to Councilmember Mathewson, Interim Community Development Director de Melo clarified that implementation costs could range from \$40,000 to \$75,000. Information Services Manager Harnish responded that the ability to make on-line payments for inspections is included in the E-Commerce component of the Tech Plan, scheduled for completion during the current

fiscal year. She noted that the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system will be accessible through personal digital assistants (PDA's) once that project is implemented.

Councilmember Mathewson noted that some components of the recommendations could be combined to ease implementation, and recommended regrouping them accordingly.

Interim Community Development Director de Melo noted that improvements have already been made to the backlog of projects requiring Planning Commission review. Seventeen of 22 projects (60 percent) are forwarded to the Commission within 100 days. In response to questions, he stated that he would need four to six months under current staffing levels to determine if staffing is sufficient for additional improvements. He clarified that some of the recommendations could be phased in.

Councilmember Feierbach expressed concern regarding the ongoing need for design review, and 400 square feet is an appropriate threshold. She also expressed concern regarding costs to implement these recommendations. She recommended that the Planning Commission could utilize the question and answer system currently used by Council for its staff reports. She also recommended that the Commission review the Task Force recommendations.

Interim Community Development Director de Melo stated that staff reports have changed over the years, and projects have become more complex due to slope, trees, grading, bulk, and mass of buildings. He expressed concern that if staff reports were simplified, projects could get continued, which is not efficient.

Councilmember Bauer recommended consideration for a touch-screen kiosk to access planning information, including costs for project review and permits. Interim Community Development Director de Melo responded that the depth and breadth of projects dictate costs, and a submittal is needed in order to analyze costs.

In response to Council questions, Interim Community Development Director de Melo stated that approximately 20-25 percent of projects fall within the 400 – 1,000 square foot range, and there are numerous projects in the 300 – 400 square foot threshold.

Mayor Warden stated that some projects are problematic, and he recommended consideration be given to impose a surcharge for excessive submittals, since staff is spending too much time on incomplete submittals. He concurred with the recommendation to require an architect or engineer on projects greater than 18 percent slope. Interim Community Development Director de Melo responded that current projects be exempt from this requirement, and a surcharge be assessed for the third submittal.

Councilmember Bauer supports the 18 percent slope recommendation, and expressed concern regarding the surcharge for excessive submittals, since many projects are owner/builder. He stated that as an alternative, the applicant could be billed for additional hours.

Mayor Warden stated the costs should be passed on to the applicant's engineer if they have not provided complete information. He noted that in one case, an applicant made 22 submittals for one project. The City should not be subsidizing errors and omissions on the part of an applicant.

Building Official Nolfi stated that contract plan checkers currently assess the City a surcharge on the third submittal.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that information from staff to the applicant needs to be accurate as well.

**RECESS: 10:25**

**RECONVENE: 10:30**

**MEETING EXTENSION:** At this time, being 10:30 P.M. on a motion by Councilmember Mathewson, seconded by Mayor Warden, the meeting was unanimously extended by one hour by a show of hands.

**Review and Direction on Recommendations from the Permit Efficiency Task Force (cont.)**

Mayor Warden recommended implementing all the no-cost recommendations and to return to Council for further discussion on the other items. He recommended publicizing the report through a press release, and to make it available on the website. He commented that the report contained many good ideas.

Councilmember Mathewson thanked staff and the task force for its work. He noted that members of the public were in attendance at many of the meetings.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that replacement of a retaining wall could be considered a public benefit. She expressed concerns for the costs for encroachment permits.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mayor Warden, seconded by Councilmember Bauer, and approved by a show of hands to implement all no-cost items as recommended by the Permit Efficiency Task Force, and to return at a future date for further discussion on the other items.

**Status Report on Holiday Banner Program**

Administrative Assistant Stallings stated that options were provided for the Ralston Avenue banners.

Council discussion ensued.

**ACTION:** Councilmember Mathewson moved and Councilmember Bauer seconded, to approve Option 2 for the Ralston Avenue banner, and to install large red bows on the light posts.

**ACTION:** Mayor Warden requested that the motion be amended to have staff select a more life-like deer for the banner. Amendment was accepted. Motion unanimously approved, as amended, by a show of hands.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Biannual Review of Council Priority Calendar - Step One: Reviewing and Ranking Projects**

Interim Assistant City Manager Gonzalez reviewed the review process for the Priority Calendar, which will establish a calendar for the next six months.

Interim Community Development Director de Melo recommended that all new projects for his department be placed below the line, and some existing projects may need to be moved below the line as well.

Councilmember Mathewson expressed concern regarding the age of the General Plan. He noted there are legal and budgetary implications for delaying its update.

Mayor Warden stated the General Plan Update would be a high priority for him at the next review. He noted the Alameda kiosk is a new item. He recommended that a calendar be produced based on the current list, and there is no need for Council to rank anything.

Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bridges stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended that any new park projects be placed on hold due to maintenance issues. He clarified that the kiosk is a low maintenance item, but the issue is whether this project would be City funded or completed using volunteers. If it is to be privately funded, the neighborhood association can manage the project. If it is to be budgeted, it can be considered for next year.

Councilmember Bauer stated that the Barrett Community Center is needed for the community.

Interim Assistant City Manager Gonzalez stated that staff could produce a calendar based on Council's discussion.

Council concurred to have staff return at the next meeting with revised Project Description Forms and a proposed Priority Calendar for consideration.

### **Discussion and Direction Regarding Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 10, Fortunetelling and Occult Practices**

City Attorney Zafferano stated this ordinance was enacted in 1961 and has never been amended. He recommended that procedures for business license applications under this ordinance be amended so that the police department performs a background check rather than hold a hearing before City Council. An appeal process to the City Manager could be included. He noted this would match the provisions in the newly revised massage ordinance. He noted that permit fees would need to be reviewed.

In response to Mayor Warden, City Attorney Zafferano clarified that some cities have ordinances regulating these businesses, and some do not. Police Chief Mattei stated that the department receives few complaints.



**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Bauer, seconded by Councilmember Feierbach, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to direct the City Attorney to return to the Council at a future meeting with a draft ordinance as proposed.

**COMMISSION, COMMITTEE, AND COUNCIL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ASSIGNMENT UPDATES, AND STAFF ITEMS**

**Consideration of Options for interior hallway displays at City Hall**

City Clerk Cook stated that since Council had been discussing options related to aesthetics in the lobby area of City Hall, it may wish to consider appointing an ad hoc committee to consider options for decorating in the remaining public areas of the building. She noted that options include the hanging of artwork, possibly for sale, and/or the display of historic Belmont photos currently stored in the History Room.

Council discussion ensued.

Councilmember Feierbach stated she was a minimalist and preferred a pristine look.

Councilmember Metropulos stated he supported the use of a rotating display case for historical items.

Councilmember Bauer stated he enjoyed the artwork that was previously displayed on the walls, and would support the display of historic photos. He supports the recommendation for the formation of an ad hoc committee.

Mayor Warden stated that members of the public are not often on the third floor of City Hall, and the Peninsula Museum is just adjacent to the building. He does not support the display of artwork.

Council concurred to approve the use of a display case for historic items, and that no artwork be hung on the walls.

**Information Regarding Upcoming vote at C/CAG on Ramp Metering Program**

Councilmember Mathewson stated that a vote would be taken at the next C/CAG meeting regarding the ramp-metering program, and he was seeking Council direction regarding Belmont's vote. He noted that this program would be paid from grants and other federal funds.

Council concurred that Councilmember Mathewson should vote yes on this matter.

**ADJOURNMENT** at this time, being 11:30 P.M.

**Terri Cook**  
**Belmont City Clerk**

Meeting Tape Recorded and Videotaped  
Audio Recording 620  
Minutes approved 11/9/2005